

TOP RANKING FACTORS

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE TRENDING TOP RANKING FACTORS

SEO is NOT Dead

- **Plenty of New Algorithm Updates**
- **Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird, RankBrain (AI and Deep Learning)**
- **New Ranking Factors – both Positive and Negative**
- **Old Blackhat Methods hardly work anymore**
- **Need to evolve your SEO with the changing Algorithm**

Ranking Factors

- **On Site Factors (60%)**
 - URL Silo, Pagename, Title, H1, Internal Links, Schema (eg. Product micro data not h atom)
- **Offsite Factors (30%)**
 - Backlinks, nofollows, topical mentions, offsite schema, social, brand searches
- **User Clicks - Rank Brain does this (10%)**
 - SERP Bounce, Internal navigation (Engagement) , Returns and Conversions.
 - They track users through Chrome.
 - They were quiet about it initially until they got base data.
 - Forbes article - Rank brain got things right 80% of the time compared to engineers 70%
 - Still a baby growing up. More data... makes it better!

RankBrain – The New Algorithm

- **What is RankBrain?**

- RankBrain is a new algorithm, and is Hummingbird plus Artificial Intelligence
- Hummingbird ranks entities by building Knowledge Graphs.
- It reads your site and schema to make an entity database out of it.
- It affected 90% of search queries when it was released in 2013.
- RankBrain tracks searches, clicks and search termination, in addition to doing what Hummingbird already does with sophistication of AI and tracking User Behavior for its Deep Learning
- Example of tracking user behavior: While doing a brand search, the result that gets clicked more, gets boosted.
- It works on ... “Know, Do, Go” Queries that are Global or Local (Pigeon update).
- 15% of daily queries are never seen before queries (that is 500 million daily queries are new)
- RankBrain ran silently for over a year gathering data (since early 2015)

Click Through Rate (CTR)

- **An All New Ranking Factor**

- **CTR is a Ranking Factor Now.**
- **You need to get users to click through more with proper Titles & Descriptions.**
- **Search termination and bounce backs are very important now.**
- **You can check your CTR in Google Search Console.**
- **See how Your listing looks in the SERPs and make it stand out for higher CTR.**
- **Use catchy words that draw the attention of the reader and get them to click!**

Click Through Rate (CTR)

- **Optimizing for a better CTR**

- **Firstly, users should be searching for your brand.**
- **OR - Your brand + your service or product**
- **When they search for your brand, your CTR in the SERPS should be close to 100%**
- **Anything below 60% is a problem! *Google thinks - why won't users click your site listing?***
- **Then, make sure you satisfy the users search query, when they visit your site (conversion).**
- **They should definitely not bounce back to Google!**
- **To improve brand recall you can use a short and catchy name.**
- **You can do some advertising, so Google sees visits and interaction on your site.**
- **You need to provide better value than your competitors. Period.**
- **Make users return and share content and even bookmark your site in their browser.**
- ***Trick Google* Have a contest! Offer 10% off if a visitor goes back to Google and does a brand search, clicks on your result and comes to your site and can then use the coupon and check out.**

Keyword Research

- **Doing Better Keyword Research**

- Use the Google Keyword Planner tool.
- Make sure to initially start research with broad phrases
- Then drill down to long tail keywords and exact match keywords
- And use keywords that are relevant and make sense to use for your content.
- You can filter Keyword Planner results by area and also look at mobile queries
- Make sure to limit your content to ONE primary topic per page.
- Use your primary/secondary keywords in the Title, H1,H2,H3 without keyword stuffing.
- Do not use Exact Match Domains (EMDs) as they are dangerous now.

Keyword Research

- **Doing Better Keyword Research**

- Remember - A good (catchy) Title and Description will give you a higher CTR.
- Make sure to update your content regularly, and include published dates.
- Identify your most important pages, and tell Google they are the most important pages by making sure that they...
 - Get the most internal links
 - Must have links to them from homepage
- Remember that large sites have more Authority, but only if content is good, and...
 - Their pages convert...
 - The user intent happens...
 - Be it - Sign ups, clicks, purchase etc.

Mobile First Index

- **Google has said that Mobile Index is more important than Desktop**
 - You should focus on Mobile Experience first
 - Desktop is secondary while designing, optimizing etc
 - Make sure your site is Responsive
 - AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages) version is important but does not affect rankings

Local SEO

- **Some Rules Have Changed**

- **Get a Google Photographer from your local area listed in Google Business Pages to come to your place and do a photo shoot that you then upload.**
- ***Hint* You can ask him to refer you to other local SEO clients and in return you give him the business of your clients.**
- **You must have only one highly specific category in your Google Maps Listing, and other secondary.**
- **Again - the quality of your site is important, so is task completion and search termination.**
- **You must get good Reviews from BBB, Local Forums, Blogs, G+, Yelp, FB.**
- **Your site must be Mobile optimized.**
- **Your Business Name must be clickable! You do this by ensuring that your Business Name includes your business name and your service name.**
- **Driving Directions embed, GMB Categories properly**
- **NAP can be a bit flexible now**

Social Signals

- **Be Real & Be Popular!**

- **Must have REAL social activity on your main social profiles... FB, Twitter, G+**
- **Your Social Profiles and Pages must be real, organic and active. NO bots.**
- **Don't spam your social profiles with selling offers.**
- **Always post shareworthy content that has value.**
- **If you choose to do a promotional announcement, do it once every 20 posts or so.**
- **If you can create potentially viral content, that is a huge plus.**
- **Engage with your audience. Talk to them.**
- **Shares of your pages are important ranking signal... you can get high buzz from experts in your niche. (Tip: use the Buzzsumo tool for outreach)**
- **Remember - clicks from Social pages ARE IMPORTANT and IS a ranking factor (no matter how much Google search team may choose to deny it).**

Social Signals

- **You Need to be Popular**

- Topical References
- Social Shares
- Brand Searches
- Social Profile Proof
- Ratings and Reviews

- **You Need to be Real**

- Get real aged robust social accounts in your region doing real activity on google search.
- Get visitors to click on your result and visit your site and engage with your content.
- You can incentivize users to do this (sort of blackhat)
- But never buy bot traffic!
- Never use proxy IPs.
- All your Social Profiles must all be active.
- Users must click and terminate search results.

Backlinks

- **[Good Backlinks] You Should Get Links From**
 - **High authority sites (real businesses, news sites, charity sites)**
 - **Links from sites where everyone else is NOT there**
 - **Main contextual links**
 - **Anchor must be natural**
 - **Appropriate volume of links**

(Do NOT match the SEO spam patterns)

Backlinks

- **[Toxic Backlinks] You Should NOT Get Links From**
 - **New blogs**
 - **Directories, Article Sites**
 - **Excessive – Sidebar or footer links (Dofollow)**
 - **Excessive – Blog Comments, Social bookmarks, forum profiles**
 - **Spammy links are defined by the SEO community (the algo is trained by them)**
 - **NO more than 10% EMQ, PMQ (even if in URL) anchors**

Panda Algorithm

- **What Panda Is**

- **Is a Negative Ranking Factor (a demoter).**
- **It checks your site regularly... for low quality pages.**
- **It's now based on primarily on Usage Metrics & Onsite Factors**
- **Panda now automatically updates in 2016**
- **They collected the average baseline clicks and conversions in each industry.**
- **Remember that Google has multiple quality Algorithms and factors.**
- **You can see accompanying resources PDF for the full list of factors.**

Panda Algorithm

- **What Panda Likes**

- **Users satisfied and converting over 50%**
- **Professional and clean website look**
- **A Legitimate business or entity**
- **Outbound links to authority sites in your niche**
- **A site that is shared, liked, reviewed, rated etc.**

Panda Algorithm

- **What Panda Does NOT Like**
 - A boring blog
 - A site that has keyword stuffing
 - Bad reputation site
 - A site that annoys users with ads (Fred Update)
 - Too many affiliate links
 - URL parameters in your navigation links... ?=xyz
 - Bad design and bad html

Penguin Algorithm

- **What Penguin is**

- Is another Negative Ranking Factor and a demoter.
- Works on links mostly (and some on-page factors)
- Works on on-page and off-page over-optimization issues.
- More than 10% of Exact Match Query Links -> Exact Match Query Page on domain, are a problem and will get detected by Penguin.
- Example: “Buy red apples” anchors, link to <http://yoursite.com/buyredapples.html>
- Do not have over-optimized ... title, alt, title tags, URL, content, anchors.
- Negative link juice can flow from a internally hit page to your other pages.
- Disavow File – It does not work as intended by Google.
- If it did blackhats would get out easily!
- So, if you get a penalty you really need to delete your toxic links.
- A manual penalty may let you out more easily.

Penguin Algorithm

- **How To Fix a Penguin Hit Site**

- **Remove on-page keyword stuffing and repetition**
- **Delete your 80%+ links and then try disavow request (if manual penalty)**
- **Start a new site (but Google may automatically 301 your old site to new site)**
- **404 or delete target pages**

Manual Actions or Penalties

- **Where To Find Them**

- Come from Manual Web Spam team
- 6 or more types of manual actions
- Listed in Search Console in “Search Traffic”
- Your site must have Search Console installed on it to see them

- **Most Important Notices to Pay attention to**

- Action vs Site - you need to delete all the links and then beg to get out with disavow + reconsideration request. *(Google wants you to put spammy links in their disavow file for crowdsourcing their machine learning.)*
- Action vs Links – Do NOTHING. It’s just a warning to change. They are only taking the links out from your link graph.

Duplicate Content

- **Is there a “Duplicate Content Penalty?”**
 - No such thing.
 - It just forces google to choose which page to rank.
 - And it always chooses legacy + authority
 - You don't want Google to have to choose if your site content is unique or not
 - Google trusts sites with duplicate content LESS
 - Duplicate content (is a quality issue) and is a canonical (technical) issue.

Duplicate Content

- **How To Fix Duplicate Content Issues**

- Use tools like - pubsubhubbub, xindexer, and tell search console to spider your content first
- Install view-source blockers... the ones that block right click copy paste
- Use Copyscape tool to find copiers (use their batch search)
- File DMCA requests with Google
- Maintain an Accurate Sitemap. (this may not be important any more)
- Finally rewrite your duplicate content, and add video and images and did you know factoids etc.

Closing Note

- **Be Aware of where is Google going with this...**
 - **Currently SEO is getting to depend more and more on Google tracking user behavior**
 - **Google is using links and social signals to find trusted pages to rank and then solidifies the rankings by tracking user behavior and engagement metrics etc.**
 - **Google Search is now a Mobile First Index**
 - *User tracking is just an interim stage until Google perfects their AI and Deep Learning.*
 - **Once they reach the perfect AI stage, Google will then understand and identify the best pages for rankings, automatically without needing any external ranking factors like backlinks and or tracking user behavior.**

Thanks for Watching!